

AMENDMENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-6. Canceled.

7. (Currently amended) A laser machining method for cutting a workpiece by moving the workpiece relative to a laser beam shining means while applying a laser beam to the workpiece by said laser beam shining means, which comprises:

a protective film coating step of coating a to-be-machined surface ~~to-be machined~~, of the workpiece with a protective film;

a laser beam shining step of applying a laser beam to the workpiece through said protective film; and

a protective film removal step of removing washing away said protective film by water after completion of said laser beam shining step,

wherein said protective film is formed by coating said to-be-machined surface with a liquid resin and allowing the resulting coating to be hardened with the passage of time, and wherein said liquid resin is water-soluble.

8-11. Canceled.

12. (Original) The laser machining method according to claim 7, wherein the workpiece is a semiconductor wafer.